

# Safeguarding 7 minute briefing: Child Neglect

## Messages for Good Practice

- Hold regular reviews to ensure that the required changes are occurring in the family in a timely fashion
- Remember to record facts rather than subjective observations, e.g. record "The child's clothes smelled of urine". Do not record "The child was smelly".

## Messages for Good Practice

- Different causal factors require different and targeted responses to cases of neglect
- Practical resources are beneficial, but it is essential to review regularly whether they are improving the child's lived experience

## Protection and Action to be Taken

When supporting a family, care must be taken to resist the pressure to focus on the needs of the parents/carers: intervention should concentrate on ensuring that the child's needs are being met. Low-level concerns may be a warning sign for later neglect. Early intervention can be important in assisting families and prevent significant harm to the child(ren)



## Background

Can be more difficult to define & identify than other types of abuse. There are a range of causal factors including:

- Parents may lack the necessary skills and knowledge
- Lack of secure attachments, causing lack of care & empathy
- Parents may have poor mental health or a learning disability
- Parents may be affected by substance misuse or domestic abuse
- The family may live in impoverished and isolated circumstances

## Definition

Neglect is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education as "the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development."

## Risks of Neglect

Up to age 2: can have profound effects on a child's development, leading to problems with self esteem, emotional regulation and relationships.

Up to age 5: It is likely to damage all aspects of development

In later childhood it is also likely to lead to problems with aspects of adult life.

## Indicators of Neglect

Neglect differs from other forms of abuse in that there is rarely a single incident or crisis that draws attention to the family. It is repeated, persistent, neglectful behaviour that causes incremental damage over a period of time. It relates to the lack of a parents capacity to meet the physical & emotional needs of the child. There is no set pattern of signs that indicate neglect other than that the child's basic needs are not being adequately met. Remember; a child might not understand that they are being neglected.

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